

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 1-9, 11-19 and 21 will be active in the application subsequent to entry of this Amendment.

Discussion of Amendments to the Claims

The claims have been amended in order to more particularly point out and distinctly claim that which applicants regard as their invention. Claim 1 has been amended in order to incorporate the temperature range of original claim 10, the significance of which is discussed below. Claim 6 has been amended to employ traditional *Markush* terminology. Claim 10 has been canceled for the reason just indicated, a minor adjustment is made to claim 19 and claim 20 has been deleted as being non-statutory.

Claim 1 as above amended incorporates the subject matter of original claim 10. This has been done to differentiate the present invention more clearly from the Tzanov document and patent application No. 2003/0041387 A1.

In step (a) of amended claim 1, the fabric is contacted at an elevated temperature with a thermostable enzyme which degrades starch. At such an elevated temperature of 80-100°C, cracks are formed in the cuticula of cotton, such that the bioscouring enzyme used in step (b) can enter the primary cell wall of the cotton. The use of a thermostable enzyme is an essential feature of the present invention, since regular, non-thermostable, enzymes will not be active at such elevated temperatures. Crack formation in the cuticula of cotton will indeed occur at a temperature in the range of from 80-100°C, not below such temperatures.

Response to Prior Art-Based Rejections

The application as examined included 21 claims. The first prior art-based rejection was directed to claims 1, 2, 4-9, 12, 13 and 15-21 but this reference was not applied to claims 3, 10, 11 or 14. The second prior art-based rejection as stated on page 4 of the Official Action was directed to claims 1, 2, 4-9 and 12-21 but not to claims 3, 10 and 11.

According to counsel's understanding claims 3, 10 and 11 are free of the prior art. With the subject matter of claim 10 incorporated into claim 1, from which all claims depend, either directly or indirectly, it is clear then that all pending claims are in condition for allowance as there are no rejections in the Official Action directed to any of these claims as above amended.

For completion of the record the two cited documents are discussed and their lack of relevance to the subject matter now claimed explained.

First, with respect to the Tzanov document, it is noted that it uses regular, *non-thermostable*, enzymes which are immediately inactivated (denatured) at a temperature in the range of from 80-100°C. Furthermore, the use of such regular enzymes operating at medium temperatures up to 70°C requires much longer incubation times. Tzanov's procedure uses an enzymatic incubation duration of no less than two hours which stands in stark contrast with the present invention (*see* the working Examples). In Tzanov only elevated temperatures are used to *inactivate* the non-thermostable enzyme when the enzymatic process as such has been finished. Only the conventional alkaline scouring where sodium hydroxide is used, is conducted at an elevated temperature. However, this process step (scouring) has nothing to do with the enzymatic desizing and scouring process step which his now described in claim 1, as any skilled person would immediately realize.

Hence, the present invention as now defined in amended claim 1 differs essentially from the teaching of the Tzanov reference.

As regards the Xu et al published patent application, applicant observes that no use is made of an elevated temperature in the range of from 80-100°C. In addition, it is noted Xu et al use only regular, non-thermostable enzymes.

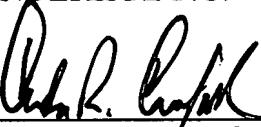
For the above reasons it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance there being no relevant prior art rejections directed to any of them. If this Amendment does not place all claims in condition for allowance, the examiner is requested to contact the undersigned.

Reconsideration and favorable action are solicited.

LENTING
Appl. No. 10/533,316
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Respectfully submitted,

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